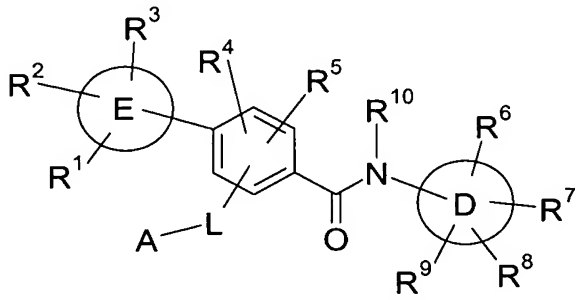
IN THE CLAIMS

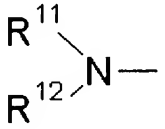
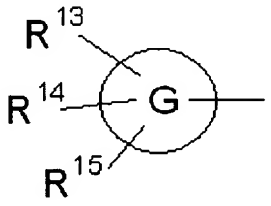
Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A benzamide derivative represented by ~~the following general~~ formula (I):



(I)

wherein the symbols have the following meanings:

A :  , OR  ,

L: a lower alkylene[[,]];

D ring and E ring: the same or different, a monocyclic or bicyclic hydrocarbon ring, or a 5- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heteroaromatic ring ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O[[,]];

G ring: a 4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O[[,]];

R^1 to R^9: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl, a halogen-substituted lower alkyl, -OH, -SH, -O-lower alkyl, -O-lower alkyl-NH-lower alkyl, -O-lower alkyl-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, =O, -NH_2, -NH-lower alkyl, -N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -S-lower alkyl, -SO-lower alkyl, -SO_2-lower alkyl, -CN, -COOH, -C(=O)-O-lower alkyl, -C(=O)-NH_2, -C(=O)-NH-lower alkyl, -C(=O)-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -NH-C(=O)-O-lower alkyl, -NH-SO_2-lower alkyl, -

SO_2-NH_2, -SO_2-NH-lower alkyl, -C(=O)-lower alkyl, -NO_2 or a nitrogen-containing saturated heterocycle[[,]];

R^{10}: a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl[[,]];

R^{11} to R^{15}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl, a halogen-substituted lower alkyl, -OH, -O-lower alkyl, -S-lower alkyl, -SO-lower alkyl, -SO_2-lower alkyl, =O, -C(=O)H, -C(=O)-lower alkyl, -COOH, -CN, -NH_2, -NH-lower alkyl, -N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -C(=O)-NH_2, -C(=O)-NH-lower alkyl, -C(=O)-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -C(=O)-aryl, -C(=O)-NH-aryl, -NH-C(=O)-lower alkyl, -NH-C(=O)-aryl, -NH-SO_2-lower alkyl, -N(lower alkyl)-SO_2-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-NH-SO_2-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-NH-SO_2-aryl, -C(=O)-O-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-OH, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-NH-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-NH_2, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-OH, -lower alkylene-O-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-S-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-O-C(=O)-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-NH-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -lower alkylene-aryl, a cycloalkyl, an aryl,

-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-O-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-lower alkylene-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-C(=O)-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-lower alkylene-N(lower alkyl)-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O), or

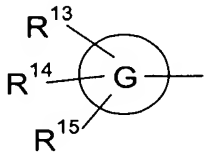
-C(=O)-NH-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

and the above monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle may be substituted by halogen atom(s), lower alkyl(s), -O-lower alkyl, or -OH[[,]];

or a salt thereof.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 1, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ E ring in ~~the above~~ formula (I) is a benzene or thiophene ring.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 2, wherein the ~~group represented by~~ A ring in ~~the above~~ formula (I) is ~~the following formula~~:



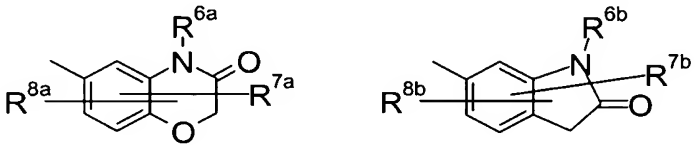
wherein the G ring and R^{13} to R^{15} have the same meanings as in ~~the above~~ formula (I).

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 3, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ G ring ~~in the above formula (I)~~ is a nitrogen-containing saturated heterocycle ~~and the~~ wherein a ring nitrogen atom is bonded to L.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 4 [[3]], wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ G ring ~~in the above formula (I)~~ is ~~a ring~~ selected from the group consisting of morpholine, piperidine, [[or]] and pyrrolidine, wherein a ~~and the~~ ring nitrogen atom of the ring group is bonded to L.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 3, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ D ring ~~in the above formula (I)~~ is ~~a ring~~ selected from the group consisting of benzothiazole, quinoline, isoquinoline, indoline, tetrahydroquinoline, tetrahydroisoquinoline, 3,4-dihydro-2*H*-1,4-benzoxazine, dihydroquinoline, and dihydroisoquinoline.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 3, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ D ring, ~~in the above formula (I)~~ together with the groups represented by R^6 to R^9 to be bonded thereto, form a group ~~selected from~~ represented by the following formulae:

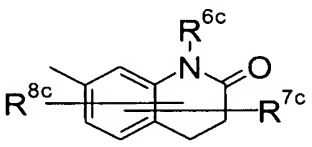


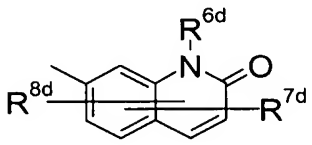
wherein the symbols have the following meanings:

R^{6a} and R^{6b}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl, and

R^{7a}, R^{8a}, R^{7b}, and R^{8b}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 3, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ D ring, ~~in the above formula (I)~~ together with the groups represented by R^6 to R^9 to be bonded thereto, form a group ~~selected from~~ represented by the following formulae:



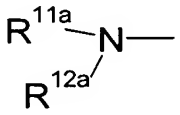


wherein the symbols have the following meanings:

R^{6c} and R^{6d}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl, and

R^{7c}, R^{8c}, R^{7d}, and R^{8d}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 2, wherein the ~~group represented by~~ A ring ~~in the above formula (I)~~ is ~~the following formula~~ represented by:



wherein the symbols have the following meanings:

R^{11a} and R^{12a}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl, a halogen-substituted lower alkyl, -O-lower alkyl, -SO_2-lower alkyl, -C(=O)H, -C(=O)-lower alkyl, -CN, -NH_2, -NH-lower alkyl, -N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -C(=O)-NH_2, -C(=O)-NH-lower alkyl, -C(=O)-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -C(=O)-aryl, -C(=O)-NH-aryl, -NH-C(=O)-lower alkyl, -NH-C(=O)-aryl, -NH-SO_2-lower alkyl, -N(lower alkyl)-SO_2-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-NH-SO_2-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-NH-SO_2-aryl, -C(=O)-O-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-OH, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-NH-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-NH_2, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-OH, -lower alkylene-O-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-S-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-O-C(=O)-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-NH-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -lower alkylene-aryl, a cycloalkyl, an aryl,

-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-O-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-lower alkylene-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-C(=O)-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O),

-lower alkylene-N(lower alkyl)-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O), or

-C(=O)-NH-(4- to 12-membered monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle ~~containing~~ comprising 1 to 4 atoms ~~of one or more kinds of heteroatoms~~ selected from the group consisting of N, S, and O), and

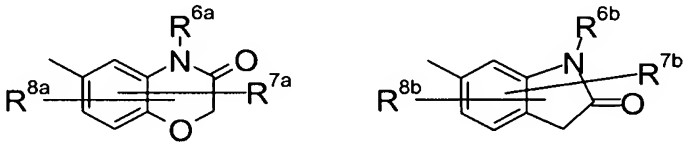
the above monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle may be substituted by a halogen atom, a lower alkyl, -O-lower alkyl, or -OH.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 9, wherein R^{11a} is a lower alkyl and R^{12a} is a group selected from the group consisting of -lower alkylene-O-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-S-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-NH-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -lower alkylene-OH, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-NH-lower alkyl, -lower alkylene-C(=O)-N(lower alkyl)$_2$, -lower alkylene-aryl, a cycloalkyl, an aryl, -(monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle), and -lower alkylene-(monocyclic or bicyclic heterocycle).

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 9, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ D ring ~~in the above formula (I)~~ is ~~a ring~~ selected from the group consisting of benzothiazole, quinoline, isoquinoline, indoline, tetrahydroquinoline,

tetrahydroisoquinoline, 3,4-dihydro-2*H*-1,4-benzoxazine, dihydroquinoline, and dihydroisoquinoline.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 9, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ D ring, ~~in the above formula (I)~~ together with the groups represented by R^6 to R^9 to be bonded thereto, form a group ~~selected from~~ represented by the following formulae:

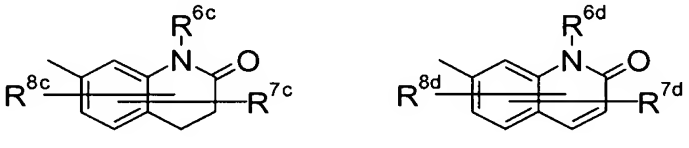


wherein the symbols have the following meanings:

R^{6a} and R^{6b}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl, and

R^{7a}, R^{8a}, R^{7b}, and R^{8b}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): The compound according to claim 9, wherein the ~~ring represented by~~ D ring, ~~in the above formula (I)~~ together with the groups represented by R^6 to R^9 to be bonded thereto, form a group ~~selected from~~ represented by the following formulae:



wherein the symbols have the following meanings:

R^{6c} and R^{6d}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl, and

R^{7c}, R^{8c}, R^{7d}, and R^{8d}: the same or different, a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, a lower alkyl, or a halogen-substituted lower alkyl.

Claim 14 (Canceled0):

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): A pharmaceutical composition comprising a benzamide derivative represented by ~~the general~~ formula (I) according to claim 1 or a salt thereof and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

Claims 16–18 (Canceled):

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): A method for ~~preventing or~~ treating pain, which comprises administering [[an]] a therapeutically effective amount of a benzamide derivative represented by ~~the general~~ formula (I) according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, to a ~~mammal~~ patient in need thereof.

Claim 20 (Canceled):

Claim 21 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is 2-[(2,5-dimethylpyrrolidin-1-yl)methyl]-N-(1-methyl-2-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-7-yl)biphenyl-4-carboxamide.

Claim 22 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is N-(1-methyl-2-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-7-yl)-2-[(2-methylpyrrolidin-1-yl)methyl]biphenyl-4-carboxamide.

Claim 23 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is 2-{[ethyl(tetrahydro-2*H*-pyran-4-yl)amino]methyl}-*N*-(1-methyl-2-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-7-yl)biphenyl-4-carboxamide.

Claim 24 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is *N*-(1-methyl-2-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-7-yl)-3-(piperidin-1-ylmethyl)-4-(2-thienyl)benzamide.

Claim 25 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is 2-{[ethyl(tetrahydro-2*H*-thiopyran-4-yl)amino]methyl}-*N*-(1-methyl-2-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-7-yl)biphenyl-4-carboxamide.

Claim 26 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is *N,N*-diethyl-4-[(4-{[(1-methyl-2-oxo-1,2,3,4-tetrahydroquinolin-7-yl)amino]carbonyl}biphenyl-2-yl)methyl]morpholine-3-carboxamide.

Claim 27 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is N-[(2R)-2-methyl-3-oxo-3,4-dihydro-2H-1,4-benzoxazin-6-yl]-2-(piperidin-1-ylmethyl)biphenyl-4-carboxamide.

Claim 28 (New): The compound according to claim 1 or a salt thereof, wherein the benzamide derivative represented by formula (I) is *N*-(2,4-dimethyl-3-oxo-3,4-dihydro-2*H*-1,4-benzoxazin-6-yl)-2-(piperidin-1-ylmethyl)biphenyl-4-carboxamide.